

FOOD \$ENSE -- SNAC SEATTLE NUTRITION ACTION CONSORTIUM

SNAC is a multi-agency collaborative effort working since 1994 to promote nutrition messages and teach practical nutrition education. Community organizations, government programs, businesses, and an enthusiastic staff are responsible for the program's success.



SNAC's mission is to improve the health and nutritional well being of limited income families with children in the Greater Seattle area. SNAC promotes the good taste of healthy food and encourages families to eat meals together.

Goals:

SNAC partners work cooperatively to deliver nutrition education and messages that:

- Increase nutrition knowledge,
- Improve food preparation skills, and
- Teach families to prepare quick economical, tasty and nutritious meals.

Our message is simple. Healthy meals are easy to make and taste great!

2005 Accomplishments:

- During 2005 SNAC expanded programming to nearly ninety nutrition education classes, events and demonstrations per month in a variety of community settings.
- SNAC's nutrition education outreach assistants delivered nutrition education to approximately 4,000 youth and 1,000 adults, resulting in over 6,000 youth and 3,000 adult contacts each year.
- Program evaluation results show an improvement in nutrition knowledge and participants' intention to eat more fruits and vegetables in the future.



Olympic Hills Elementary School

Photo: J. Harsila

Mission: Delicious

Mission: Delicious is a popular event that takes place in fourteen Seattle Public Schools (SPS). One hundred twenty kindergarten-third graders in four classes at each school attend the event that takes place in the cafeteria. The students rotate through two stations. Each station includes a fifteen-minute nutrition lesson and students prepare and enjoy their own healthy snack. Teachers give complementary lessons before and after the event and educational materials are sent home to families.

ECEAP (Early Childhood Education Assistance Program)

During ECEAP preschool classes students are read a story book such as Nutri-Fruit Heroes to the Rescue! and interact with plush figures such as "Corny the Cob". Preschoolers enjoy a hands-on cooking experience and prepare their own Fruit Parfait.

SNAC attends evening parent groups and provides nutrition information, such as ideas to get kids to eat more vegetables, and demonstrates a healthy recipe.

SNAC visits about 30 ECEAP preschool classes each year -- about 600 preschoolers. Classrooms are visited one to two times during the year. SNAC attends about ten parent group meetings (about one hundred people).

From Kindergarten to High School

Teaching Nutrition through Cooking

SNAC's target audience is low income families who are eligible for food stamps. Classes, demonstrations and community events include a nutrition lesson or message. One of our key messages is to include more fruits and vegetables in an individual's diet everyday. SNAC also teaches topics such food safety and the importance of hand washing. Events are lively and interactive, often including hands-on cooking demonstrations that stress healthy and inexpensive meal choices. Participants learn healthy cooking techniques and taste freshly prepared food. They receive written materials, such as recipes, to take home with them.

Comments from middle school parents and students about You're the Cook! classes:

- "The recipes have been a big hit with our family. We've enjoyed several dinners he made. I'm hearing a lot about things he's learning in class. Thank you!"
- "I was surprised the meal was so tasty. The experience pulled the family closer together. The younger children even wanted to help Michael prepare the meal."
- "Yes, You're the Cook! was a positive experience for Kayla, because she has realized cooking takes time and planning. She's also enjoyed the vegetables more than she thought she would."

Student comment:

"I learned that healthy foods can actually taste good."

You're the Cook!

You're the Cook! is a three-class series that is presented in four middle schools in the SPS district to about 700 students in 25 classrooms. Students learn about nutrition, food and kitchen safety. Class members help prepare a recipe during each class. Each week students are given a homework packet and are given extra credit, if they prepare a recipe at home.



"You're the Cook" at Denny Middle School

Photo: J. Harsila

Nutrition Gardening

SNAC's garden-enhanced nutrition education program, Cultivating Youth, provides an opportunity for youth to enjoy growing and eating produce they have grown

themselves, while learning about nutrition. Cultivating Youth reaches 230 students, resulting in 5,859 contacts during in-school and after school programs throughout the school year.



Student at High Point Elementary enjoys eating from the garden.

Photo: J. Harsila

High Schools

SNAC presents lively cooking demonstrations outside of three SPS high school cafeterias at lunchtime. About 300 students sample healthy recipes and receive nutrition messages and recipes each school year.

Washington State University Extension/Food Sense SNAC's Community Partners:

City of Seattle — Human Services Department, Dept. of Neighborhoods and Parks & Recreation, City of SeaTac Parks & Recreation, Fremont Public Association, Public Health—Seattle & King County, Puget Sound Educational Service District, Seattle Public Schools, Share Our Strength/Operation Frontline,

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